

# Social Customer Relationship Management: A Literature Review

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**Abstract:** Due to technological advancement, traditional CRM approaches has become outdated now. In the current scenario, the customers are deciding the communication channels and driving conversations, and companies need to cuddle this shift. Social CRM is the new buzzword and an effective way to handle this innovative change. Social Customer Relationship Management (Social CRM) is an emerging concept that incorporates traditional CRM and social media. SCRM is equally beneficial for organisation and customers. The main objective of this paper is to present a review of scholarly literature on the benefits of social CRM for companies and factors influencing its adoption. An extensive literature review has been done to find out the benefits of Social CRM and factors influencing its adoption. To study a broad view of social CRM adoption and factors influencing its adoption, the publications of interest include scholarly journal papers from information systems and marketing disciplines and conference proceedings. In the present study, selected publications on Social Customer Relationship management were reviewed, and findings were classified into two categories: the benefits of social CRM for companies and customers, and the factors influencing CRM adoption.

**Keywords:** Social Customer Relationship Management, Customer Relationship Management, SCRM Adoption, Benefits, Factors.

## INTRODUCTION

Due to technological advancement, traditional CRM approaches has become outdated now. In the current scenario, the customers are deciding the communication channels and driving conversations, and companies need to cuddle this shift. Social CRM is the new buzzword and an effective way to handle this innovative change. Now, most of the companies whether big or small can interact with customers and improve relationships using a savvy Social CRM strategy that involves a customer-centric approach. Today, unlike traditional CRM, companies are facilitating combined efforts and experiences of social customers on social media sites. The concept of Social CRM was emerged out of the traditional customer relationship management, social media, and evolving technology. The core of Social CRM is to shape a more personal relationship with customers by observing communications and engagement, chasing behavior and preferences, understanding their opinions and responding in an appropriate manner, evaluating incoming data and developing greater marketing insights from the data collected to improve offerings, identify trends and marketing opportunities.

Social customer relationship management (social CRM) is a medium to maintain long-lasting relationships with customers and also engage them. Social CRM is perceived as a customer-centric approach to provide service and product support, raising brand awareness, marketing products and creating a community. The communication with the customer via social CRM is supposed to support companies to clearly recognize customer needs and deliver superior products and services.

A social customer relationship management strategy is a coordinated effort between an organizations' marketing, sales, and customer service departments to better engage with customers and increase brand awareness. With the help of Social Customer Relationship Management companies can maintain a more

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personal relationship with the customers by observing them on social sites like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Twitter, Pinterest, other social networks.

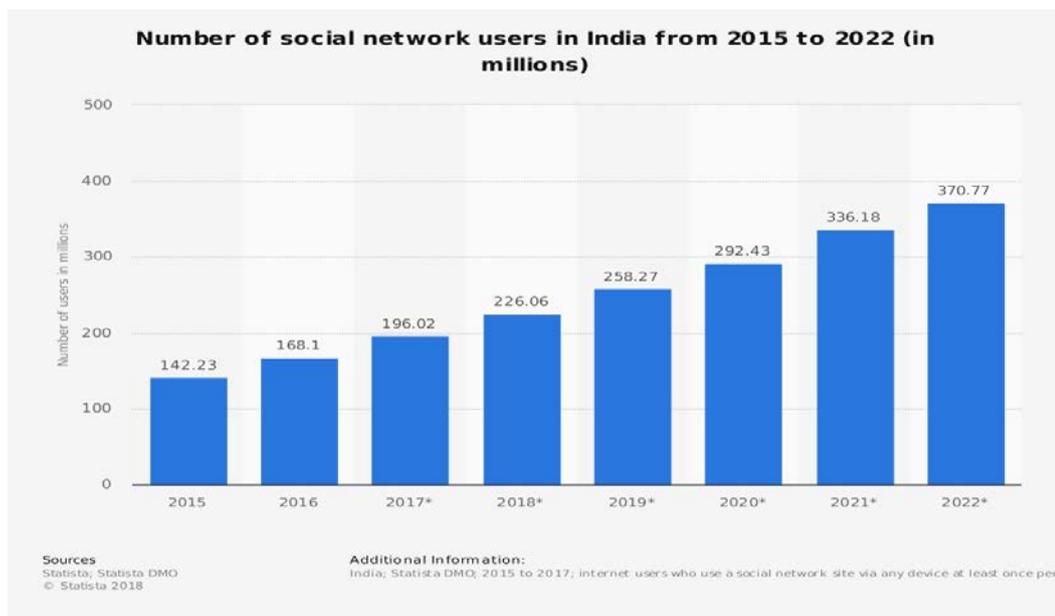


Figure 1: Number of Social Network user in India from 2015 to 2022

Above data shows that the number of social network users in India from 2015 to 2022. In 2019, it is projected that there will be around 258.27 million social network users in India, as compared to 168 million in 2016. As per the above study, most popular social networks in India are YouTube and Facebook, followed by social app WhatsApp. This is estimated that Facebook will reach close to 319 million users in India by 2021[22].

[23] Social CRM is a new method that assimilates old-style customer actions with evolving social media applications to engage customers in two-way discussions to deliver equally favorable value. In the present paper, we aim to deliver the latest insights into the newest research done in the field of social CRM adoption. The objective of this paper is to recognize the benefits of Social CRM adoption for companies as well as factors influencing adoption of Social CRM. The findings will serve as the foundation for further research. The paper is organized as follows. In the first section, we present existing literature reviews on social CRM and clarify the addressed issues. In the second section, we present a literature by the researcher. In the third section, we discuss the findings of the review while in the last section, the conclusion and further research directions are presented.

Previous Literature Reviews in Social CRM:

Table 1.1: Earlier literature reviews

|   | Year | Authors  | Span          | Central Theme  |
|---|------|--|---------------|--|
| 1 | 2012 | Awasthi and Single                                     | 2006-2010     | CRM technology in a multichannel environment   |
| 2 | 2013 | Yawised, Marshall, and Stockdale                       | Not Specified | comparison of scholarly and practitioner literature on social CRM                          |
| 3 | 2013 | Lehmkuhl and Jung                                      | 2005-2012     | organizational approaches to designing social CRM systems                                  |
| 4 | 2014 | Küpper, Jung, Lehmkuhl, Walther, and Wieneke           | Not Specified | Impact of social CRM on performance measures   |
| 5 | 2015 | MarjetaMarolt, Andreja Pucihar, Hans-Dieter Zimmermann | Not Specified | the factors influencing CRM adoption, and the impact of social CRM on performance outcomes |

The first review paper on CRM with the main attention on the multiplicity of the channels that mentioned social CRM was published by Awasthi and Single in 2012. The objective of this paper is to

throw light on adoption of CRM technology, including the CRM in a multichannel environment. The review was conducted from the research studies available from 2006-2010. The reviewed articles were categorized into four main themes based on the channel – CRM, multichannel CRM, eCRM, mCRM. The articles reviewed in this paper were mainly concentrated on the strategic alignment along with research on increasing customer loyalty and the use of data mining in CRM. They also claimed that the pragmatic support to study the practical and nontechnical issues regarding the CRM in multichannel environments should be provided.

The review explicitly focused on Social CRM was presented in a Malaysian Conference on Information Systems in 2013 [25]. This paper aims to review the literature – both scholastic and practitioner – on social CRM, make a broad comparison between the two types of literature, and identify future research agendas. It was determined that both types of literature had both general theoretical similarities and differences. The overall settlement between them is that social CRM is an extension of traditional CRM and is directed at “customer engagement”. A literature review is focused on the specific issues related to the theoretical concept of social CRM, while the practitioner literature pays more attention to new challenges and new opportunities which are offered by the emergence of social CRM.

A literature review was presented at the 26th Bled eConference [13]. This study has provided a review of the most current scholarly literature to offer a broad overview of the present social CRM information base and provide future research directions. In this study, journals were fixed into four categories with altered stress on planning social CRM systems or components thereof, including organizational factors, processes, relationship lifecycle, and social CRM framework. The authors included all journals until August 2012. They revealed that academic literature on social CRM is still inadequate and also recommend that in future empirical research should be done which will help to explore factors and outcomes of social CRM adoption.

This paper reviews the contemporary scholarly literature to provide a consolidated view of the current SCRM knowledge base and also provides future guidelines. It discloses contemporary opinions, deviating observations and future directions for research along the extents SCRM definitions, objectives and approaches. The paper concludes that SCRM is an original concept and it requires transformational efforts among all organizational parts. Approaches towards SCRM bring into line on organizational elements, CRM processes, and the customer relationship lifecycle or develop conceptual models. This study recommends that future research further can discover the development of Social CRM as a basis for corresponding frameworks.

Another literature review on social CRM is published [9]. The literature review is mainly concentrated on performance measures for social CRM. This study revealed 16 Social CRM performance measures and four categories of a performance measurement system are recognized. The paper was argued under four categories of performance measurement systems: infrastructure, process, customer, and organizational performance. The study provides recommendations for further research guidelines toward a primary social CRM performance measurement model development.

Literature review on Social CRM Adoption and its Impact on Performance Outcomes is published by [15]. This paper highlights a comprehensive view of social CRM adoption and its impact on performance outcomes and the review is based on scholarly journal papers from information systems and marketing disciplines and conference proceedings. The objectives of the paper achieved by reviewing certain journals and further findings were classified into three categories: the extent of social CRM adoption, the factors influencing CRM adoption, and the impact of social CRM on performance outcomes. The authors suggested that social CRM adoption and its implications for performance outcomes as well as the actual use of social media in the context of CRM need additional empirical support.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review provides a concrete theoretical and conceptual foundation. It comprises five steps being the definition of review scope, conceptualization of topic, search, literature analysis and synthesis, and the derivation of a research agenda. Moreover, as social CRM is a somewhat new phenomenon, most of the existing research is published in conference proceedings. In this literature review, we focused on the research outcomes and theories applied in the analyzed papers. The goal was to summarize and identify central issues, in an attempt to provide a neutral perspective that involves exposing many sides to an issue. The growth of the Internet and information technology shaped new prospects for marketers. The development saw the movement of consumers to the Internet, which meant that the marketing activities had to follow them.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is a well-developed marketing theory that seeks to establish and improve relationships with customers with the goal of creating customer value [7].

#### *Social CRM*

The most acknowledged definition of social CRM was defined as “a philosophy and a business strategy, supported by a technology platform, business rules, processes and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a collaborative conversation in order to provide mutually beneficial value in a trusted and transparent business environment”[7].

One more good definition was stated as “Social CRM is the tools and processes that encourage better, more effective customer interaction and leverage the collective intelligence of the broader customer community with the intended result of increasing intimacy between an organization and its prospects and customers. The goal is to make the relationship with the customer more intimate and tied to the company by building a public ecosystem to better understand what they want and how they interact with the various company touch points like sales, customer service etc...”[26]. Some the most significant quantitative benefits that could be achieved with the use of Social CRM are: increased sales; decreased service costs; reduced or replaced direct costs of printing and online advertising; reduced direct staff time costs; increased direct revenue from memberships, registers and advertising, exhibitions and sponsorship [4].

Gartner (2010) states the definition for social CRM. “Social CRM is a strategy for harnessing communities to support customers and prospects, as well as sales, marketing, and customer service organizations, along with a purposeful and mutually beneficial business process.” (Gartner 2010) Altimeter (2011) further simplifies the definition as follows. “Social CRM enhances the relationship aspect of CRM and builds on improving the relationship with more meaningful interactions.” “Social CRM is the tools and processes that encourage better, more effective customer interaction and leverage the collective intelligence of the broader customer community with the intended result of increasing intimacy between an organization and its prospects and customers [26]. The goal is to make the relationship with the customer more intimate and tied to the company by building a public ecosystem to better understand what they want and how they interact with the various company touch points like sales, customer service etc. This is done in a way that empowers the customer, makes the interaction more of a Web 2.0 experience and allows the customer to interact when, how and where they choose. The tools themselves are user-driven, collaborative and social in design, promote interaction and focus on user-driven innovation. They may include linkages to public social networking environments as well as private company owned systems.” There are many similar definitions, but the essence remains the same. Thus this study perceives social CRM as a logical evolution of CRM, which is enabled by social media. Social CRM combines the database technology of CRM with the individual engagement information that is revealed by social media activities. It involves the aggregation of customer information across multiple platforms, including Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Google+, Twitter, Foursquare and other social networks to automatically aggregate better customer profiles. “Social Customer” in today’s Social CRM environment [7].

Preliminary results reveal that academic research focuses more on the specific issues surrounding the theoretical concept of social CRM (e.g. identifying the key determinants of social CRM adoption and building a framework to determine relevant core process functionalities), whilst practitioner research pays more attention to actions to respond to new challenges and capitalize on new opportunities offered by the emergence of social CRM phenomenon. From both the academic and practitioner points of view, attention must be placed on the development of the business case for social CRM implementation. In particular, research offering useful tips on how to successfully adopt social networking sites as value-creating CRM tools would be of significant value.

In the previous studies some benefits of social CRM have been identified such as creating trust, acquiring customer insights, founding customer loyalty, attaining customer retention, connecting customers in new product or service development, improving customer lifetime value and company status, and pull down the cost of service [1] [15] [20] [21] [23] [24] [25].

Because of constant technological improvements and diffusion of mobile gadgets, like smartphones, tablets, laptops and the internet connectivity itself, the ongoing social (media) revolution is still taking place and affects many daily operations in B2B but also B2C relationships. Furthermore, the number of social media users is growing exponentially. It is estimated that by 2018 more than 2.4 billion people will be active on social networks, wikis, microblogs and other peer-to-peer platforms [22]. Those numbers underline the importance of Social Media channels for customers but also for global operating companies.

It is because Social Media offers organizations the opportunity to engage with globally dispersed customers and gain more in-depth customer insights (IBM, 2011). Due to the benefits of Social Media with concerns to customers, now companies are paying attention towards the two closely connected business areas, Social Media and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for refining relationships with customers. The junction of both domains has led to a new field of research for marketers and scholars that are of highest interest in the area of Social Media and marketing: Social Customer Relationship Management (Social CRM). Social CRM defines how companies can recognize and enhance customers' interests by including tools that assimilate Social Media data into existing CRM Systems. "The integration of Social Media and CRM technology has created the entirely new 'Social CRM' marketplace that is forecasted to grow to more than a \$9 billion global market by 2018." "Social CRM is the strategic development of traditional CRM, which uses Web 2.0 technologies and applications to enable organizations to interact with their current and potential target customers. The integration of social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Xing or Twitter into traditional CRM approaches embraces the opportunity to exploit valuable customer information that enhances performance outcomes." [16]. Social CRM that is departed from CRM 2.0 links and incorporates traditional CRM systems with the Social Web, which intensifies a wide-ranging research area. The Involvement of the social element into present CRM influences all the areas of management such as sales, marketing, strategy and IT departments which makes an incorporation of the concept thought-provoking, complex and ambiguous [8] [1]. However, the concept gives a new kind of customer insights with advanced technological tools and strategies that can drive a company's performance.

Social CRM not only managing efficient customer relations within the system but also facilitates the discussion and partnership amongst an enterprise and its customers, since the constituents are based on Web 2.0 technologies, which incorporate data and discussions from e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and other social networks [11]. However, Social CRM is measured to be a universal concept which is still in its beginning, because it has been appeared recently and also in scholarly research the focus is restricted [13]. Subsequently, researchers examine for insights into Social CRM as a business strategy from diverse angles.

### **Social CRM Adoption**

The application of Social CRM by companies are still in the primary stage of adoption [15]. Therefore it is important to understand the factors that influence the adoption of Social CRM. It is clear that Social CRM is not just a technology or software, it includes several elements that need to be taken into account to offer value for customers and web users [2][3]. Therefore, Social CRM should be understood as a new business strategy. There are a variety of factors related to the acceptance and adoption of Social CRM [2]. The factors are recognized as networking, collaboration, participation, familiarity, care, information sharing and perceived trustworthiness" [3]. Because information and knowledge in Social media are built and shared by social interaction, the determinants networking, collaboration and participation are the most important elements for Social CRM systems and must be considered as a norm [3]. Another study related to the acceptance of Social CRM is from [15], who identified customers as well as organizational factors that influence the adoption. In the presented with the important factors that organizations need to consider when implementing Social CRM. This should be considered that factors related to the adoption of traditional CRM are mostly the same for the adoption of Social CRM [15]. Social CRM activities include the communication and association between companies and customers, as well as with other (potential) customers on Social Media, and the collection as well as investigation of Social Media data through suitable technologies (i.e., Social CRM tools) [24].

[24] For instance present a checklist that can be helpful for organizations that are planning to integrate social CRM with their existing way of how they manage customers' relationship. The management support has been identified as a very important along with building and retaining the skilled employees in this area, evolving working culture, evolving social CRM policies and guidelines, changing the nature of measurement and evaluation and development of right IT and data architecture. A similar set of factors was also identified by [21] and [14].

From the above information, we can determine that the factors that have proven to have an impact on the adoption of CRM are also measured significant in the framework of social CRM adoption.

Findings from Literature Review: This was also taken into consideration during the process of the literature review. In this literature review main consideration was given to problems related to academic concepts of Social CRM, in the prior researches, some of the researchers created models of Social CRM. Some of the researchers they associate theoretical models with prevailing theories, such as the

Technology Acceptance Model and to recognize factors that affect social CRM adoption, containing TAM [3], TOE [2]. [3] used TAM as a base construction of their conceptual model and also help to find out customers along with organizational factors that influence social CRM adoption. They propose that further research should extend the model with other factors (i.e. relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, top management support, inter-organizational networks, organizational innovativeness), followed by in-depth analysis of social CRM influence on both customer and organizations. To explore factors that impact social CRM activities of SMEs Dynamic capabilities theory was used by Harrigan and Miles (2014). They established that online communities are offering the major shift from eCRM to social CRM. [24] For instance present a checklist that can be helpful for organizations that are planning to integrate social CRM with their existing way of how they manage.

From the extensive literature review of around 30 journals following benefits has been derived by the researcher.

| Benefits   | Authors   | Description   |
|--|---|---|
| Customer Engagement  | Greenberg <a href="#">2009</a> , Lee and Lan <a href="#">2007</a> , Olbrich and Holsing <a href="#">2012</a>  | Social CRM as a business strategy is maintained by a technological framework, and social characteristics, designed to engage the customer in a combined discussion in order to provide equally favorable in a trusted and transparent business environment. |
| Building Trust   | Greenberg <a href="#">2009</a> , Lee and Lan <a href="#">2007</a> .   | Social CRM is developing and evolving trust between company and customers which mutually beneficial for them  |
| Establishing Customer Insights                             | Acker et al., <a href="#">2011</a> ; Küpper, Lehmkuhl, and Jung, <a href="#">2015</a> ;   | Social CRM is beneficial to identify the behavior pattern of customers.   |
| Improving Customer Experience                              | Faase et al. <a href="#">2011</a> ; Mossadegh and Behboudi <a href="#">2011</a> ; Reinhold and Alt <a href="#">2011</a> ; Sarner et al. <a href="#">2012</a> ). | By interacting with the customers in real time improves the overall customer experience towards the organization  |
| Customer involvement in new Product or Service Development | Faase et al. <a href="#">2011</a> ; Mosadegh and Behboudi <a href="#">2011</a> ; Reinhold and Alt <a href="#">2011</a> ; Sarner et al. <a href="#">2012</a> ).  | Social CRM is helpful in the involvement of customers in the development of the product or service offered by the company.  |
| Improving Customer lifetime value                          | Faase et al. <a href="#">2011</a> ; Mosadegh and Behboudi <a href="#">2011</a> ; Reinhold and Alt <a href="#">2011</a> ; Sarner et al. <a href="#">2012</a> ).  | Social CRM is improving Customer lifetime value by customer engagement  |
| Lowering the Cost of Service                               | Reinhold and Alt <a href="#">2011</a> ; Sarner et al. <a href="#">2012</a> ), Dreyer and Grant <a href="#">2011b</a>  | The most significant quantitative benefits that could be achieved with the use of Social CRM is lowering the cost of service  |

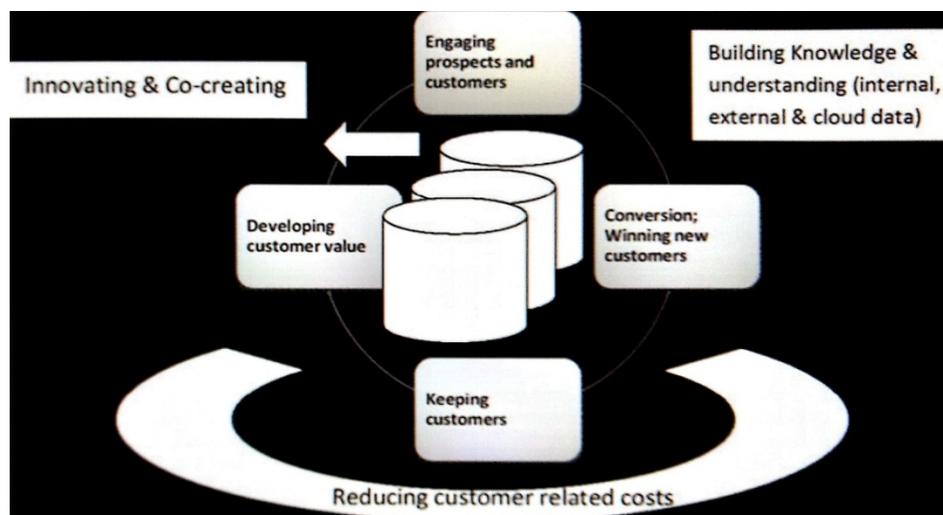


Figure 1: The benefits of SCRM. Source: The Customer Framework 2011.

### Factors Influencing Social CRM Adoption

| Factors                          | Authors  | Description   |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Social CRM Strategy              | (Malthouse et al., 2013; Sigala, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011)                        | Social CRM strategy of an organization is dependent on the level of customer engagement in social media. So, Social CRM policies can be used in a way that can influence adoption.                            |
| Perceived Usefulness             | (School & Nakata, 2012; Malthouse et al., 2013; Sigala, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011) | Social CRM adoption is helpful in determining and managing the social value of customers and it also influences the perception of the perceived usefulness and consequently influences the need for adoption. |
| Information Technology knowledge | (Malthouse et al., 2013; Woodcock et al., 2011); Askool& Nakata, 2010                | To understand consumer behavior in today's context Social CRM should be used in a right manner and updated knowledge of Information technology also influence Social CRM adoption.                            |
| Skilled Employees                | Askool& Nakata, 2012; Malthouse et al., 2013; Sigala, 2011; Woodcock et al., 2011    | Employee skills are also influenced the adoption of Social CRM.   |
| Perceived Trustworthiness        | Askool and Nakata (2010),  | Trust on the new Social CRM tool is required  |
| Customer Engagement              | Greenberg 2010, p. 414; Woodcock, Broomfield, et al. 2011, p. 253                    | Customer Engagement in social media also influences Social CRM adoption in the current business scenario.   |

**Conclusion:** The objective of present study is to conduct a literature review on social CRM adoption with specific importance on benefits and factors influencing its adoption which is based on recently published papers in journals and conferences between 2010 and 2015. Researcher reviewed various articles and classified the findings into two categories: the benefits of social CRM adoption, the factors influencing social CRM adoption.

Therefore, the systematic and empirical examination of factors that influence social CRM adoption and its implications for performance outcomes is needed. Additionally, more emphasis should be given to how social media extent traditional CRM. To end with, the findings from existing social CRM models should be combined into a holistic social CRM model that will include the entire chain of social CRM adoption. The review will provide an outline of the entire social CRM adoption situation. This literature review on social CRM in the selected period (since 2010) might have been affected by some restrictions. First, even though a variety of journals and several renowned conferences in the field of information systems and marketing were considered in this study, it may happen that this topic had also been covered in other journals and conferences. Furthermore, as this study was conducted for a limited period, it could be possible that we missed some previous findings regarding this topic as well. Additionally, there might be studies that we missed, because they investigate similar phenomena but discuss it with different terms.

The main objective of the study was to conduct a literature review on social CRM adoption with particular emphasis on benefits and factors affecting Social CRM adoption based on recently published papers in journals and conferences between 2010 and 2015. We reviewed around 30 articles and classified our findings in two categories: the factors influencing social CRM adoption, and the benefits of social CRM adoption or companies. With this classification, we tried to cover the complete chain of social CRM adoption. Researcher's interpretations have established that many researchers projected social CRM models based on existing theories and models of traditional CRM. In spite of the increase of journals on social CRM adoption, the available publications are still mostly of a conceptual nature. Consequently, the organized and empirical investigation of factors that influence social CRM adoption and its implications for performance outcomes is required. Additionally, more emphasis should be given to how social media extent traditional CRM. To end with, the findings from existing social CRM models should be incorporated

into a comprehensive social CRM model that will cover the entire chain of social CRM adoption. This study will provide an overview of the complete social CRM adoption situation. This literature review on social CRM in the selected period (from 2010 to 2015) might have been some restrictions. First, even though a variety of journals and several renowned conferences in the field of information systems and marketing were considered in this study, it may happen that this topic had also been covered in other journals and conferences. Furthermore, as this study was conducted for a limited period, it could be possible that we missed some previous findings regarding this topic as well. Additionally, there might be studies that we missed, because they investigate similar phenomena but discuss it with different terms.

For future research, the organized and empirical inspection of factors that influence social CRM adoption and its consequences for performance outcomes is required. Furthermore, more prominence should be given the role of Social CRM in Today's business scenario.

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